

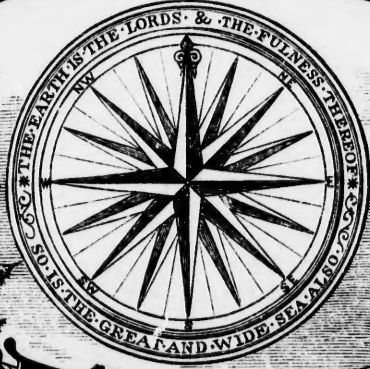
Mwp
971E
Y391



MISSION LIFE OR

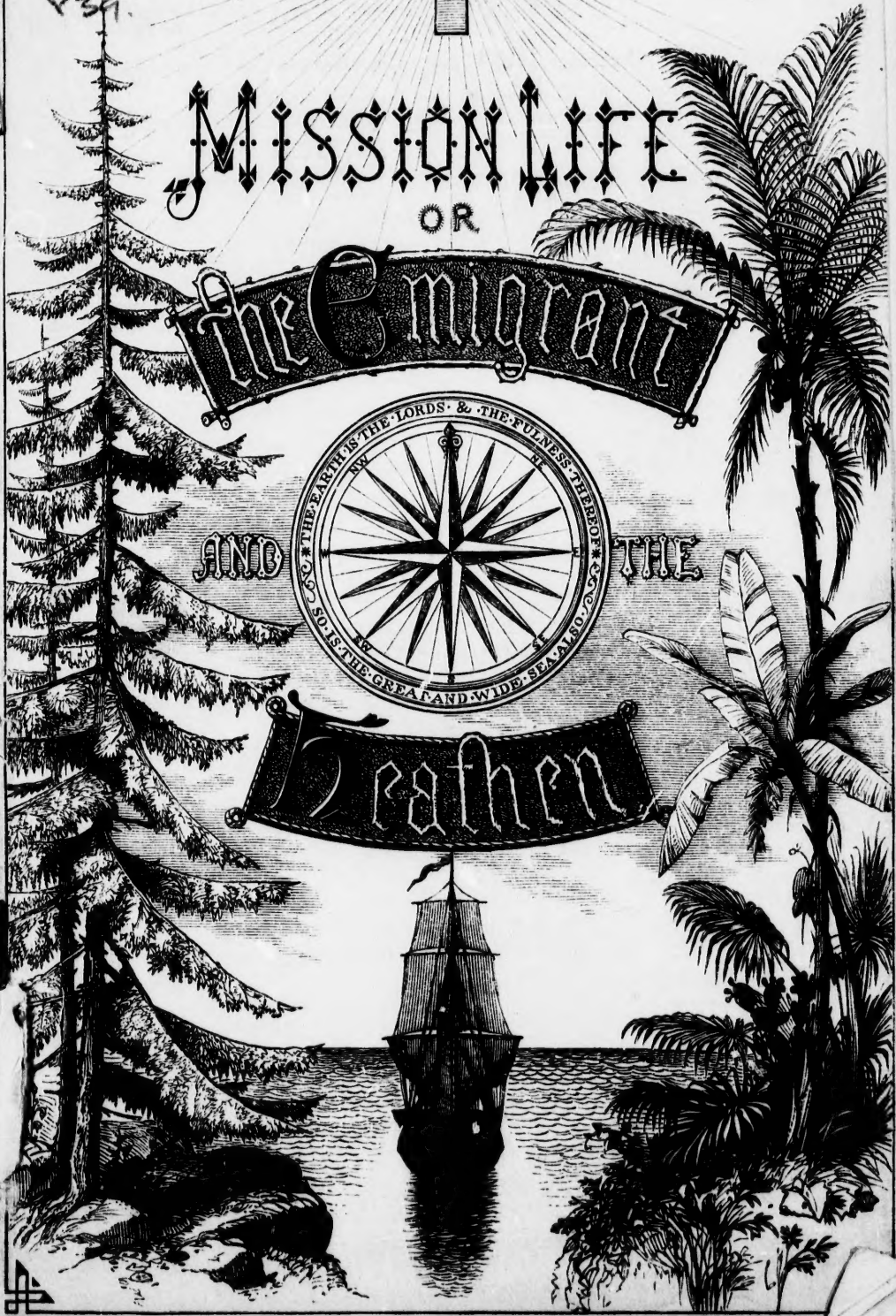
The Emigrant

AND



THE

Heathen



W
97
Y3

WUP
971E
Y39

Rupert Land

Mission Life,
Oct. 1, 1866.]

REVIEW.

363

first year, I received the following account from the Bishop—"Poor Mr Ison was released most easily and happily on Monday evening, and I followed him to the grave as chief mourner yesterday. It was a melancholy scene."

Such was our beginning—"Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing."

(To be continued.)

REVIEW.

A Year's Journey through the Diocese of Rupert's Land. Being a review by the EDITOR of the North-West Passage Over-Land. Messrs Cassell, Petter, and Galpin.

SOME few years back the writer of the present notice had the pleasure of meeting the then Bishop of Rupert's Land in a not altogether uneducated company, in the neighbourhood of Oxford, and well remembers the repeated whisper, Where is it? Without, therefore, venturing to presume upon the same ignorance in any of our readers, it may be well to say that the diocese of Rupert's Land, before the dioceses of British Columbia and of New Westminster were taken from it, was nominally conterminous with the vast territory of the Hudson's Bay Company, stretching across the Rocky Mountains, from the Atlantic, on the one hand, to the Pacific on the other. Its present extent may be illustrated by the fact* that, at a recent meeting of his clergy, the Bishop, when accounting for the absence of two of their body, had to explain that the district in which one was placed was distant 1200 miles to the east, and that the other would have had to travel no less than 2500 from the north-west. We may add, that the country is named after Prince Rupert, who, in 1688, erected Fort Charles in James's Bay. The Hudson's Bay Company was incorporated by Charles II. in 1670—its object being to trade with the Indians in furs, which are still the staple commodity of the country.

The native population of Rupert's Land is upwards of 100,000, and that of British Columbia, on the other side of the Rocky Mountains, is estimated at 80,000. We have only to bear these facts in mind to understand the interest which must attach to an account of a lengthened sojourn in such a country. A glance at the map which accompanies this number of *Mission Life* will show at once the importance, from a more general point of view, of a North-West Passage by Land, and the advantages which must accrue to commerce and civilisation, not less than to the cause of religion, by the opening of what is likely to become the great high road of the world.

* Work on the Colonies, p. 82.

68046

[Mission Life,
Oct. 1, 1866.]

As on the occasion alluded to above, the then Bishop of Rupert's Land, giving an account of a visitation tour through his diocese, described himself as travelling for weeks together, lying upon his back in a native canoe, and reviving old associations in the midst of the wild solitudes through which his weary journey lay, by conversing with one of his few *compagnons de voyage*, a pocket edition of Horace, his words left a vivid impression of the central figure of a picture, of which the fuller description of the work before supplies the details. Judging from our own experience in this instance, we believe that it will add considerably to the interest with which this book is perused, if the reader can be led more or less to identify any of the scenes described with the everyday life of the self-denying men who have voluntarily exchanged the comforts of English homes and the amenities of English life for the manifold hardships of this most trying of all the spheres of missionary labour. We shall, therefore, offer no apology for suggesting a subject for a companion picture to the above from the travels of the present Bishop of Rupert's Land:—

"The Bishop is off on a trip of two or three months. He thinks he may do it under that time, but I don't think he will; even with every advantage of men, weather, and dogs. He left this . . . stowed away in a dog-sleigh; he and his three men started for the Company's post on the Memitoban. He has sketched out for himself a great mass of work, and a long long trip for the severe winter months. May he be strong for it, and leave a blessing behind him in those remote places. What a change from college life! from the university to the wilderness, from every mode of agreeable travelling to the dog-sleigh, sleeping out in the bush, or on the plains, the canopy of heaven very often for his roof, bushes and boughs for his bed, carefully excluding every breath of air beneath his buffalo robes and blankets, shivering and shaking with cold in a morning when he opens up, *i.e.*, throws off his furs and blankets, making a poor meal, and again consigning himself to his coffin-like sleigh for the day, or occasionally running to get some warmth and circulation."*

But to our book. First for the authors, for it is a joint production—Lord Milton and Dr Cheadle. We may mention, as likely to establish in the minds of some of our readers a sort of brotherhood with them in their travels, that they are both Cambridge men; and if we are not mistaken, the stalwart figure of the latter has before now found an appropriate place in the centre of the University eight. The expedition was, to use a common euphemism, a pleasure-trip, a prolonged long-vacation ramble. The travellers left Liverpool in June 1862; Quebec—"with its bright white houses tricked out with green clinging to the sides of a commanding bluff, which appears to rise up in the middle of the St Lawrence, so as to bar all passage"—was reached on the 2d of July. The journey to Wisconsin, on the banks of the Mississippi, was performed by rail. The Mississippi was then ascended in a steamer. The steamer was again exchanged for the stage waggon running through the outsettlements of Minnesota. Arriving at the Red River, the question was, How to get to

* *The Mission Field*, Sept. 1866.

Fort Garry, situated, indeed, on its banks, but 500 miles distant? Two crazy birch-bark canoes, sitting so lightly upon the water that a puff of wind would drive them about like a walnut-shell, were eventually chartered, but no guide could be secured. The baggage was necessarily limited by the nature of the conveyance—it consisted of twenty pounds of flour, the same of pemmican, (a species of dried meat,) a little salt pork, some grease, tinder, and matches, a small quantity of tea, salt, tobacco, and plenty of ammunition, a tin kettle and frying-pan, some blankets, and a waterproof sheet, a small axe, with a gun and hunting knife a piece. Many were the adventures of the journey. At first all went well.

"We glided along pleasantly enough, lazily paddling or floating quietly down the sluggish stream. The day was hot and bright, and we courted the grateful shade of the trees which overhung the bank on either side. The stillness of the woods were broken by the dip of our paddles, the occasional splash of a fish, or the cry of various birds. The squirrel played and chirruped among the branches of the trees, the spotted woodpecker tapped on the hollow trunk, while perched high on the topmost bough of some withered giant of the forest the eagle and hawk uttered their harsh and discordant screams. . . . Thoroughly did we enjoy these wild scenes and sounds; but soon the unvarying sameness of the river, and the limited prospect, shut in by rising banks on either side, gave a monotony to our daily journey; and the routine of cooking, chopping, loading and unloading canoes, paddling and shooting, amusing enough at first, began to grow rather tiresome."

After a few days' monotonous voyaging, it was decided to try a night journey. The night was clear and starlight, but ominous clouds soon began to roll up. Before long—

"The darkness became complete; then, without previous warning, a dazzling flash of lightning lit up for a moment the wild scene around us, and, almost instantaneously, a tremendous clap of thunder, an explosion, like the bursting of a magazine, caused us to stop paddling, and sit silent and appalled. A fierce blast of wind swept over the river, snapping great trees, like twigs, on every side; the rain poured down in floods, and soaked us through and through; flash followed flash in quick succession, with its accompanying roar of thunder. We made an attempt to land at once, but the darkness was so intense that we could not see to avoid the snags and fallen timber which beset the steep, slippery bank. . . . There was nothing else for it but to face it out till daylight, and we therefore fastened the two canoes together, and again gave ourselves up to the fury of the storm. . . . Hour after hour passed by, but the storm raged as furiously, and the rain came down as fast as ever. . . . The canoes were gradually filling with water, which had crept up nearly to our waists, and the gunwales were barely above the surface. It became very doubtful whether they would float till daybreak. The night air was raw and cold, and as we sat in our involuntary hip-bath, with the rain beating upon us, we shivered from head to foot; our teeth chattered, and our hands became so benumbed that we could scarcely grasp the paddle. But we dared not take a moment's rest from our exciting work, in watching and sheering clear of the snags and rocks, although we were almost tempted to give up, and resign ourselves to chance. Never will any

of us forget the misery of that night, or the intense feeling of relief we experienced when we first observed rather a lessening of the darkness, than any positive appearance of light. Shortly before this the storm began sensibly to abate, but the rain poured down as fast as ever, when we hastily landed in the gray morning on a muddy bank, the first practicable place we came to. Drawing our canoes high on shore, that they might not be swept off by the rising flood, we wrapped ourselves in our dripping blankets, and, utterly weary and worn out, slept long and soundly."

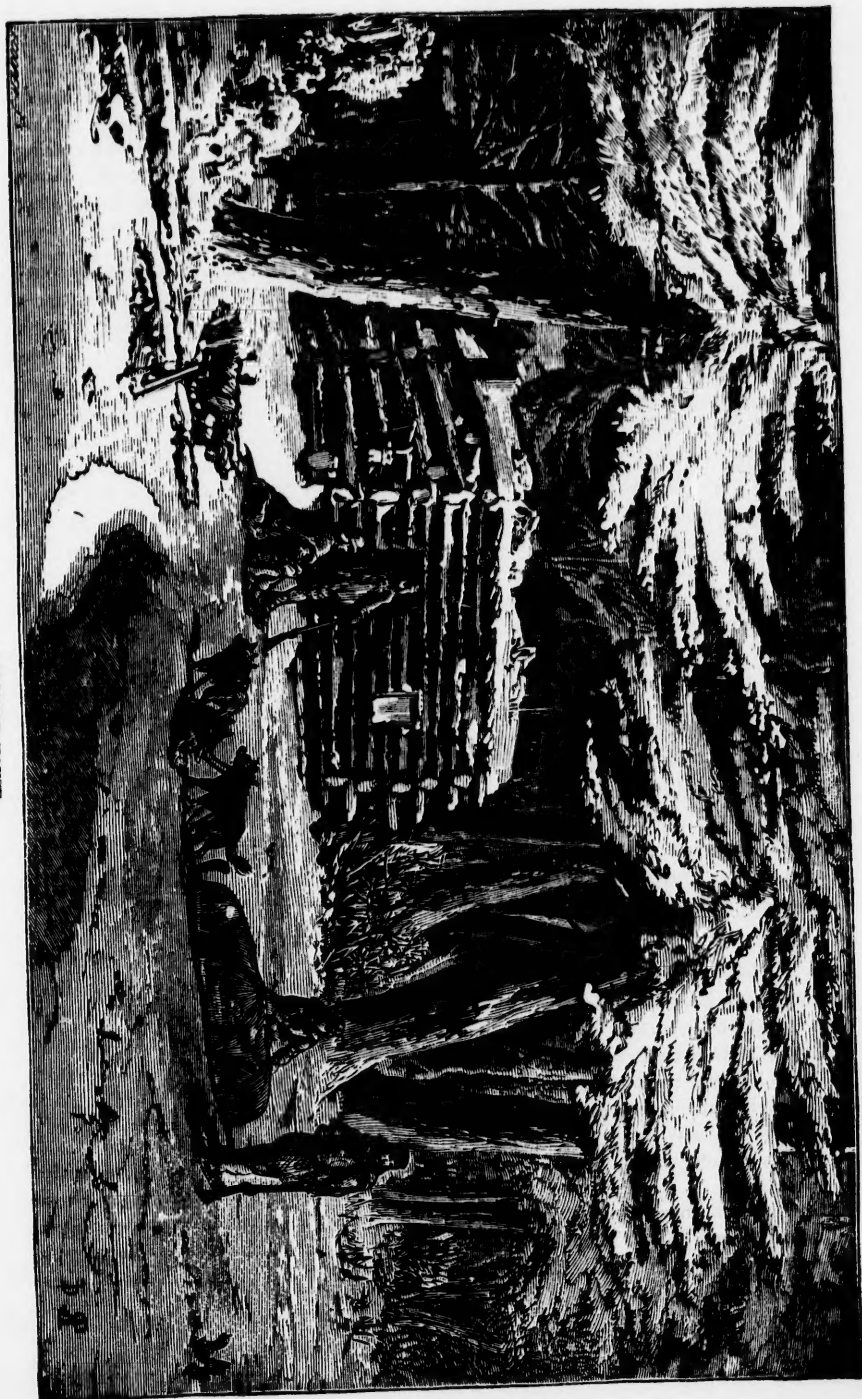
This is but a specimen of the perils and hardships which were encountered, and which were increased by two similar storms during the eighteen days' voyage.

We are next introduced to the Red River settlement, and a post or fort of the Hudson's Bay Company. Here our travellers met Bishop Anderson, whose kindness and hospitality is duly recorded. The settlement comprises a heterogeneous community of about 8000 souls,—English, Irish, Scotch, English and French Canadians, Americans, English and Canadian half-breeds, and Indians,—nearly all of whom are dependent upon the Company. The farmers are well-to-do. "The soil is so fertile that wheat is raised, year after year, on the same land, and yields fifty and sixty bushels to the acre, without any manure being required." The only drawback being that there is no market for the produce. "It is the interest and policy of the Company to discourage emigration, and to keep the country as one vast preserve for fur-bearing animals. . . . At least 60 millions of acres of the richest soil lie ready for the farmer when he shall be allowed to enter in and possess it." Hopes are held out that this time may not be far distant, and that this last great monopoly is likely to give way to a more enlightened policy.

As it was found impossible to attempt to cross the Rocky Mountains until the following spring, it was decided to make a farther advance into a good hunting country, and then take up winter quarters.

The record of the next few months is full of interest. The winter house, which was immediately built on the banks of a small lake, and of which, by the kind courtesy of the publishers, we are enabled to give the accompanying engraving, is thus described :—

"A rude enclosure, fifteen feet by thirteen, was first made of rough poplar logs, morticed together at the corners of the building. The logs, however, did not by any means lie in opposition, and the spaces between them would admit of a hand being passed through. As yet there was neither door, window, nor roof, and the walls were but six feet high in front, and little over five feet behind. These deficiencies were however soon supplied by the ingenious La Ronde, in a much simpler fashion than we had expected. A doorway and window was hewn through the solid walls; a door constructed of boards from the carts; whilst a piece of parchment supplied the place of window-glass. The roof was covered in by straight poles of young, dry pines, and over this was a thatch of marsh grass, weighted down by loose earth thrown over. The lowness of the building externally was remedied inside by digging out the ground two feet, rendering the



A WINTER HOUSE.

building very much warmer. The interstices between the logs were filled up with mud, mixed with chopped grass, to give it tenacity. . . . The parchment windows of our little hut were so small and opaque that we could hardly see even to eat by their light alone, and were generally obliged to have the door open ; and thus, although the room was very small, and the fire-place very large, a crust of ice formed over the tea in our tin cups, as we sat within a yard of the roaring fire. One effect of the cold was to give a most ravenous appetite for fat. Many a time have we eaten great lumps of hard grease—rancid tallow, used for making candles, without bread, or anything to modify it."

The journey (about 800 miles was still to be accomplished) was recommenced in April, but the final preparations for crossing the mountains were not made till June, at Fort Edmonton. There several pack horses were obtained, and the services of a half-breed hunter, rejoicing in the name of Assiniboine, were secured, the only drawback to the efficiencies of the latter being that he was one-handed, and insisted on taking his wife and son with him. An unexpected addition was also made to the party in the person of an ex-schoolmaster and graduate of Cambridge, who, on the breaking out of the American war, had fled from the Southern States, to escape the anticipated honour of being elected a "Captain of the Home Guard," and who pleaded hard to be allowed the advantage of an escort to British Columbia. We do not wonder that the reviewers of the North-West Passage have been unanimous in regarding Mr O. B. as a mythic personage ; and whilst, therefore, accepting the statement of the authors, in their preface to a late edition, that he is *not* a fictitious character, but a real actor in the story, portrayed as faithfully and truly as it lay in their power to depict him, we can only express a regret that some enterprising publisher has not secured the individual, for the sake of making known his history, which, if put forth, say under the title of the "Gentleman in Black," would most effectually and for ever eclipse its only possible rival in the way of biography, "The Woman in White."

From Fort Edmonton the only available track was that of a party of Canadian emigrants, who had gone on the same route the preceding year, but of whom nothing had since been heard. The following extract will give some idea of the nature of the travelling from this point:—

"The huge trunks which barred the path rendered our progress very laborious. The pack horses wearied us by breaking away into the forest, rather than leap over the obstructions in the way, and from morning to night we were incessantly running after them to drive them back. Then they rushed about in every direction but the right one, crashing and tumbling amongst the timber, and often involving themselves in some serious embarrassment. Jamming their packs between adjacent trees, trying to pass under an inclining trunk, too low to admit the saddle, or jumping into collections of timber, where their legs became hopelessly entangled. . . . The trail had been made by the Canadians when the river was low, and was now frequently lost in deep water. At these points we were obliged to cut a new line for ourselves along steep, timber-strewn hill-sides. The forest was as dense as ever, and the trees of the largest 'Muskegs' occupied the hollows

between the pine-clad hills, which ran up, at short intervals, with steep front towards the river. The horses mired, and were dragged out—walked into the river, and were hauled back—entangled themselves in fallen timber, and were chopped out—or hid themselves in the thick wood, and had to be sought."

On one occasion a raft, which had been laboriously made for one of the numerous crossings of the river, was upset, and one of the horses lost, and almost all their stores. Here is Mr O. B.'s commentary on the event:—

"I've had a terrible shock to-day—a terrible shock! *Mihi frigidus horror membra quatit.* I'm trembling with the recollection of it now. Ah! doctor, doctor, you don't know what I suffered. The sound of this dreadful water in my ears is more than I can bear. I want to know whether you think there will be any more rivers to cross. But please move on a few miles, please do—there's a good fellow, just to oblige me, out of hearing of this terrible noise. *Heu me miserum! iterum iterumque, strepitum fluminum audio!*"

However, Mr O. B. betook himself, as usual in such emergencies, to the study of a pocket edition of Paley's "Evidences," and soon regained his equanimity. But at the next river, nothing would induce him to attempt the passage "until, roused by the prospect of being left behind, just as the last horse left the bank, he rushed madly in, and grasping its flowing tail with both hands was towed triumphantly over. After this great success his anxiety about prospective rivers was greatly decreased."

On the 27th of July, some days after the descent of the western side of the mountains had been commenced, and when still more than one hundred miles from the nearest post, Kamloops, the trail came to an end. The emigrants had evidently given up the work of cutting their way by land in despair, had killed their horses, and made a raft, and committed themselves to the river. A council of war was now held—the river was known to abound with rapids—the requisites for making a suitable raft were wanting, it was therefore determined to persevere, and try to cut a way along the banks of the river. Terrible were the hardships endured, and it was only by killing and eating two of their horses—their selves reduced to skin and bone—that they escaped a miserable death by starvation. From two to five miles a day was the average progress made, and that only by the desperate exertions of men struggling for their lives. At last, however, at the end of August Kamloops was reached. Here tidings were first heard of the Canadian emigrants. Their raft had been upset at the "Grand Rapid," and a large number of them drowned. The others had reached Kamloops more dead than alive. Three of their number who had been separated from the rest had perished in the most horrible manner, two of them having murdered their companion, and one of the two having prolonged his life a few days by killing his fellow-murderer.

By the middle of September, *New Westminster* was safely reached.

We are sorry to say that throughout the book the only allusion to the efforts for the introduction of Christianity into the countries described is

an account of a Romish Mission Station. An unfavourable impression of Protestant Missions in Rupert's Land seems to have been created, some explanation of which may be found in the fact that the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel is only able to expend somewhat less than £400 a year in this diocese, and that though the Church Missionary Society is enabled to support as many as nineteen clergymen, its revenues are manifestly unequal to the task of evangelising so vast a territory. The blame, therefore, if any, rests with the general body of English Churchmen.

We quote the description of the presiding Romish priest :—

"Père Lacombe was an exceedingly intelligent man, and we found his society very agreeable. Although a French Canadian, he spoke English very fluently, and his knowledge of the Cree language was acknowledged by the half-breeds to be superior to their own. Gladly accepting his invitation to stay and dine, we followed him into his house, which contained only a single room, with a sleeping-loft above. The furniture consisted of a small table, and a couple of rough chairs, and the walls were adorned with several coloured prints, amongst which were a portrait of his holiness the Pope, another of the bishop of the Red River, and a picture representing some very substantial and stolid-looking angels, lifting very jolly saints out of the flames of purgatory. After a capital dinner on soup, fish, and dried meat, with delicious vegetables, we strolled round the settlement in company with our host. He showed us several very respectable farms, with rich corn-fields; large bands of horses, and herds of fat cattle. He had devoted himself to the work of improving the condition of his flock, had brought out at great expense ploughs and other farming implements for their use, and was at present completing a corn-mill to be worked by horse power. He had built a chapel, and established schools for the half-breed children. The substantial bridge we had crossed was the result of his exertions. Altogether, this little settlement was the most flourishing community we had seen since leaving Red River, and it must be confessed that the Romish priests far exceed their Protestant brethren in missionary enterprise and influence. They have established stations at Isle à la Crosse, St Alban's, St Ann's, and other places far out in the wilds, undeterred by danger or hardship, and, gathering half-breeds and Indians around them, have taught, with considerable success, the elements of civilisation as well as religion."

After a short sojourn at Victoria, Vancouver's Island, undeterred by their former experiences, Lord Milton and Dr Cheadle undertook another journey, to visit the gold districts of Cariboo, of which a most graphic description is given.

The interest of the "North-West Passage" must be our apology for this long notice. We heartily commend the book to our readers, only adding that, besides its many other attractions, it is admirably illustrated, and printed in a type to which we only regret that publishers do not oftener treat the reading public.